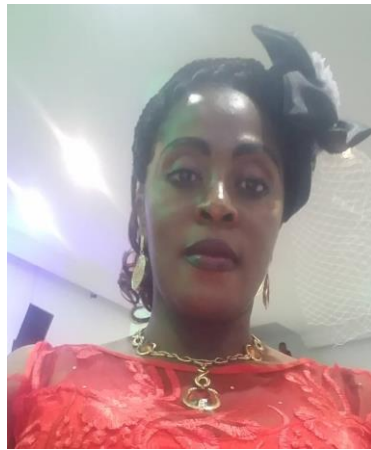




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**RENEGOTIATING SPACE IN ISDORE OKPEWHO'S *CALL ME BY MY  
RIGHTFUL NAME* AND BUCHI EMECHETA'S *KEHINDE***



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## **ABSTRACT**

*This work set out to paint vivid pictures of different societies where displacement and renegotiation of space have become an integral part of the lives of Blacks both in Africa and the Diaspora. Emecheta in Kehinde portray the ordeal undergone by displaced people in order to adapt to the diverse cultural practices they encounter in the new environment. Caught in this web of conflicting cultural values, some migrants opt to negotiate space by returning to their roots while others combine the different cultures and become hybrids.*

*The work is based on the hypotheses that, as a result of displacement, characters in Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me by My Rightful Name* and Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde* find themselves in cultural contexts in which they are marginalized, and are compelled to renegotiate existential space for themselves and their values.*

*Using the Postcolonial theory as critical framework, this work is built on the hypothesis that as a result of displacement, characters in Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me by My Rightful Name* and Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde* find themselves in a socio-cultural*

*context in which acute marginalization and discrimination compel them to renegotiate existential space for themselves and their values. The work depicts that both authors, Okpewho and Emecheta, believe that renegotiation of space is the ultimate way out for Black people who are oppressed and discriminated against across the colonial spectrum.*

*Migration therefore has been a major preoccupation of our contemporary context right from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial era. This has made the explanation of issues of displacement and renegotiation both in the diaspora and Africa especially Nigeria a very important venture. The works of Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta from Nigeria, attempt to give a broader spectrum of the realities of pre and post-colonial societies which in most cases are similar although different in migratory circumstances. Both writers vividly regenerate the complexities of space and identity for migrant subjects, either within or without their home locales.*

## **KEYWORDS**

*Renegotiating, space, displacement and diaspora*

## RESEARCH PAPER

### INTRODUCTION

In their texts, *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and *Kehinde*, Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta respectively paint vivid pictures of different societies where displacement and renegotiation of space have become an integral burden for Black people both in Africa and the Diaspora. Faced with multiple cultures as a result of migration from one community to another, Okpewho and Emecheta's characters are entangled at the cross-roads as they completely part off with their ancestral tradition and cannot make it without embracing new cultures.

The novels of Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta are embodiments of postcolonial literature, as they rewrite their own history and expose their identity through the narrative genre. In these works, problems of migration (displacement), slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, class, race, gender, place are responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being are explored, *Post-colonial Reader* [p.3]. In her book, *Commonwealth Literature*, Margaret Drabble says "post-colonial literature is a literature which is produced by countries which are former colonies of Britain or had the status of dominion and addresses questions of history, gender and language" (2004, p.28). Arun Mukherjee points out that:

The post-colonialists' generalization about all "post-colonial people" suggest that third Worldism and/ or nationalism bind the people of these societies in conflictless brotherhood, that the inequalities of caste and class do not exist in these societies and that their literary works are only about "resisting" or "subverting" the colonizers' discourses. (2004, p.27)

Postcolonial writers base their writings on togetherness, that is, coming together to fight a common course through their arts, as they present their culture the way it should be. African writers were preoccupied in recuperating their history from the whites who presented Africa as a land of evil; a land without civilization and having no identity.

Stephen Slemon discusses the postcolonial in, "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World", as that literature which embraces all the possible categories of subalterns such as displacement and renegotiation which preoccupied most of the characters (2005, p. 11).

Against this backdrop, postcolonial writers wrestle with these social constructs in order to explore, exploit and satirize some societal happenings in their writings, especially those societies which rely basically on travelling (migration) as Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta portray in their works, though from different perspectives. Christopher O'Reilly, in his work, entitled Post-Colonial Literature, comments that "the setting and scope of most postcolonial writings is international rather than local" (2001, p.10). This explains why both authors under study, though Nigerians, set their novels in the West and in Nigeria. Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* reflects a period where Africans were represented as 'black monkeys' and as backcloth for the fight for liberation in America. This grotesque image springs from the fact that African American activists like Malcolm X and Dr. Martin Luther King and Kehinde led the rebellion and set on the road map of Black identity, later championed by Alice Walker and Mariama Ba.

Okpewho and Emecheta reveal the issues of displacement and renegotiation of space as their characters suffer oppression and discrimination either within or without their home locales across the colonial spectrum. For these characters the nation-state or its guiding principles are often based on displacement or migration. Some of the guiding principles of migration and displacement are developed by the United Nations Organisation and placed under the Representative of the UN Secretary-General (RSG) on Internally Displaced Persons. These principles on Internal Displacement filled a major gap in the international protection system for uprooted people. Whether their development holds lessons for those seeking to develop standards in the migration field remains a question to explore or not. These people have gained broad international recognition and authority even though independent experts, not states, prepared, reviewed and finalised their provisions outside a traditional intergovernmental framework.

Thus, literature offers one of the important ways where individuals in Africa and in the diaspora can document their perception of life and commitment to their course. Literature is based on the viewing and writing of various personal or impersonal experiences that take place in different environments.

Chinweizu, Onwuchekwa Jemie J. and Madubuike, in *Toward the Decolonisation of African Literature*, see commitment as the ability of a writer to perceive social realities and make those perception available in the work of art in order to help promote understanding and preservation of, or change in some societal happenings (1980,p.35). They are saying that commitment on the side of writers help to keep the social realities in the work of art which will help in promoting our

understanding on societal happening around us. Thus, one can use a literary text to drive home his or her view point as confirms by Jonathan Culler in his book *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*. He says that “to understand literature, we may want to analyse it rather than define it” (2005, p.20). It is in the process of analysing literature that one can consider the work of art as being fictionally inclined.

In their respective texts, Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta, as contemporary writers, have portrayed keen interests in the complexities of displacement and renegotiation of existential space by black diasporic subjects. In Buchi Emecheta's novel *Kehinde*, home and belonging are problematized in the life stories of the main protagonists. Of course, gender relations are inscribed. *Call Me By My Rightful Name* belongs to the growing body of African literature that explores the ramifications of the African presence in the Western world. This novel makes a valuable contribution to the diasporic discourse by examining the important issues of racial memory and the search for one's roots among the Africans in the diaspora from two different perspectives: Western (Clinical Psychiatry) and African (Yoruba Ifa). The novel's protagonist, Otis, is an individual with a split personality and dual identities (American and African). He is a normal bubbly American youth until he is destabilized by mysterious drumming only audible to himself.

The concepts of “displacement” and “renegotiation” are not coincidental but descriptive and symbolic. “Displacement,” in this study, stands for any movement of people while “renegotiation” refers to situating one’s self wherever you are.

### ***RENEGOTIATING***

This work focuses on renegotiating space where characters are fiercely independent individuals who, however, also long to belong somewhere and experience the certainty and comfort of home. No matter what they do, they want to remain in touch with the home country in all cultural aspects. This is evidence in that this diasporic ambiguity of catering for two locations is processed through several stages of engagement and/or disengagement such as gestures and customs. The position of those abroad is, for the most part, governed by a distanced, sensitively managed and changeable commitment for home. Okpewho and Emecheta are models or pathfinders for the current wave of diasporic migrations in their creative works which show degrees of renegotiating space in relation to their cultures. Home has become an aesthetic imaginary for a dislocated and the search of cultural space is seen in the interpretation of *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and *Kehinde*

respectively. By this thinking, it is logical that the creative experience of *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and *Kehinde* would lead eventually to the imagining and construction of an aesthetic-intellectual space. Thus, anxiety that results from losing all familiar signs and symbols of a social intercourse brings in the idea of renegotiating culture. These signs include the ways in which we orient ourselves to the situation of daily life, that is, when to shake hands and what to say to people when one meets them, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statement seriously and when not. These cues may be words, gestures, customs, or norms, acquired as one grows up and are much part of a culture as the language one speaks or one's beliefs. When one enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues may be removed.

Elise C. Smith et al say in *Towards international* that: "The ways of the host country are bad because they make us feel bad" (2001, p.44). With this, Elise C. Smith et al are saying that when foreigners in a strange land get together to grouse about the host country and its people, then one can be sure they are suffering from culture shock and they are looking for a means to renegotiate their identity. This assertion is glaring in Isidore Okpewho and Buchi Emecheta's novels. They use their writings to inform society about the ill and intolerable cultures of the west. They tactfully use their creative abilities to help the masses fight for their freedom and equality and to renegotiate their cultural identities. Bhabha says in *The Location of Culture* that: "The originality of the colonial center is that the economic substructure is also a super structure...you are rich because you are white. You are white because you..." (1994, p.79)

Thus, the whites economically wanted raw material such as cotton and palm oil. They also wanted cheap labour force, and market for their manufactured goods. In addition to this, Psychological factors also played a great role as Africans are perceived in this frame as living a primitive life or as being in a state of evolutionary underdevelopment. An explorer, Sii Samuel Baker, speaking to an audience in 1874 said: "Without a history... We must therefore conclude that the races of man which now inhabit (this region) are unchanged from the prehistoric tribes who were the original inhabitants Chamberlin" (1874).

Sii in his words makes us to understand that, so far as man exists there is history. He said man's race is unchangeable. They original inhabitants of each tribe remain the same occupants of that land since history cannot be changed. As such culture remains and characters renegotiate space where they find themselves by respecting their cultural values.

Missionaries also took an active part in remaking the African culture. It is a force which radically altered the African society. Theirs' was not simple religious, but also political and cultural. Christian churches were often the allies of empire. Mission schools provided cheap administrative work force. Graduates entered the respectable profession of law and teaching. They initially sought to distinguish themselves from traditional African culture to the extent that they later became nicknamed the 'Back Victorians'. As for the historical and cultural context of Africa, the 'Africa' implies "one place and one people". Africa is made up of over 800 different ethnic groups, with their own languages, culture and history. British colonisation in Africa took different forms in different parts of the continent. Africans themselves responded to it in different ways. Historically, Europeans scrambled for Africa because of the trade on slaves and gold along the West Coast. The missionaries' aim was to divide African societies, promote European superiority and seek to eradicate traditional practices and beliefs. Missionary education was a double-edged sword which has profoundly necessitated the drive toward renegotiated of cultural identities. In this respect, Edouard Blyden said: "The African must advance by methods of his own. He must possess power distinct from that of the European.... We must know that we are able to go alone, to carve out our own way" (32)

According to Edouard, an African can grow on his own with the use of distinct from the European. They can stand alone from the experiences they have gathered from the Whiteman and make a better way out.

These novels are unique in their different settings Africa and America. The protagonists, Otis in Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and Kehinde in Buchi Emercheta's *Kehinde* are African-Americans who face the crucial hurdle that awaits the black man in the diaspora. In Emecheta's *Kehinde*, Kehinde and Albert no matter the odds still tries to uphold their Africa cultural identity while in the West. Albert rejects all those things that are against his Nigeria culture. He will not accept that a woman earns more than him and finance almost everything in the house. Albert did not appreciate living in the Whiteman's country, he struggles to renegotiate his culture by convincing the wife that they should return to Nigeria and he takes the lead for Kehinde to finish their transactions in Britain before coming back home. Albert coming back helps him to renegotiate his culture which he believes was dying out in Britain.

While in the West Albert renegotiates space. This is seen from his polygamous background. In Buchi's *Kehinde* Albert and his wife Kehinde manifest their polygamous setting since both come

from polygamous homes. They bring up their children in a strict catholic doctrine so as to eradicate the long-held polygamous from their lineage. However, we notice that though in a foreign land, Albert cannot hold back his nostalgia about being a true African man. He confesses that:

I want to go back to the way of life my father had, a life of comparative ease for men, where men were men and women were women, and one was respected as somebody....No, to be at home is better. There I can have my drinks on the verandah, and people will pay attention to me, including my wife. (1994, p.35)

The traditional Igbo man is alive and strong in Albert, 'awaiting an opportunity to reclaim his birthright (1994, p.35). While in Nigeria, Albert gets another wife, Rike. Albert wants to gain back the respect from home and the life of enjoyment where one can consume his drinks on his veranda and your wife giving him all the respects for being the husband. Africa men sit drink and eat their cola nuts while the women with children on their backs struggle to prepare food for them. Men are more respectful in Africa while woman are over worked. They are all human being but not treated the same especial as tradition is concern in Africa.

As time fades off, renegotiation of identity becomes part and parcel of the Africans. Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde*, principally exploit the experiences of these societies. With time, the fundamental assumptions put in place by tradition are being questioned and the boundary between the history of a place and their literature becomes fluid and open to reality.

More so, the physical maturity in Africa is closely linked to its wisdom. The elders are regarded as the libraries where knowledge and wisdom is stored and also govern the social life of the people. This assertion is glaring in Isidore Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name*, where Otis Hampton, an African-American who falls into periodic spasm and chants a text nobody understands. His family seeks help and the text is recorded by a psychiatrist and deciphered by linguists. The record is a chant from the Yoruba of Nigeria. The doctor advises them to take him to that ethnic region where the elders will help Otis come out of the spasm. This spiritual voice finally gets Otis to Nigeria. He says; Akindeji, Akindeji, Akindeji o! Mo ke si o lere meta, (motami) . . . okunrin (kosakitty famita) lo s'ogun Balogun (bakinboli babiji) Alaya bi aya inaki (fibira) o sororo irun..., (sibira outa) ... (Bamiyohyehyeh) (2004, pp.70-71).



This strange language is what makes him to trace his way to the Ekiti Ijoko-Odo village with the help of some Americans and the American Embassy represented by Mr. Bigelow. There, he is taken to the twin sisters Kehinde and Taiwo who immediately recognise him as their brother who had been taken as a slave and also recognise his chants as their late father's praise song as it is written:

Taiwo fixes him steadily with her eyes...Her lower lip droops and shakes. Everyone including Otis, is certain, and amused, that Otis's physique makes the women ill at ease. While they stand looking at her, she moves closer to Otis, and place a weak bony hand on his chest. Otis is no longer quite so amused. "Akin. Akin" mumble. Otis lowers his head, wondering what the woman is saying. She looks up, into his eyes she "Akin. Akin niyiiko. (2004, p.127)

Taiwo although very old could recognised Otis as their long lost brother. Akimbowale [our brother has returned]. This shows the important of names to the Africans. Otis' appearance is some sort of a relief to the old women; Taiwo moves towards Otis and places her hand on Otis' chest. She mumbles saying "Akin. Akin" as a way of recognising the present of their lost brother. Otis could not understand what she was saying. It is thus clear that at this instance Otis needs to renegotiate his space in a culture he knows nothing about.

Their belief in their ancestors and worshipped the supernatural. Here culture is being renegotiated in that, the spirits of the living-dead (ancestors) hunt the living and Otis has to go back to Nigeria, a land he has never seen, in order to reinstate his ancestral cultural sovereignty. The recorded chant also helps him to locate his surviving kin.

In addition to that, in a flashback, Otis gets to know of his ancestor Akimbowale's poetry. As the Yoruba man puts it, "Akimbowale's Ori was so strong that it cased him to be reincarnated in Otis in order to finish his grandfather's praise song". Culture in Africa becomes very important as Otis struggles to re-identify himself by searching for a means to complete the praise song and also decides to stay in Nigeria for long. Even when a child is born out of his culture, he still cumulates that culture in him, even if the parents do not teach or tell him about his heritage there is that extra-ordinary force that will come to make one go back to his roots as is the case with Otis Hampton. Thus, the title of the novel *Call Me By My Rightful Name* is of important in that, Otis continued to have attacks and chants in strange languages until he gets back to the Yoruba land and

trace his root and is given his rightful name[Akimbowale]. An example of this is also seen in Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask* when he asked:

What does a black man want? When it encounters resistance from the other, self-consciousness undergoes the experience of desire... as soon as I desire I ask to be considered. I am not merely here and now, sealed into thinness. I am for somewhere else and for something else I demand that notice be taken of my negating activity in so far as I pursue something other than life.... (1968, p.34)

Fanon speaks for the blacks especially when they are discriminated and maltreated by the whites. The next thing that comes to their mind is resistance and they now struggle to renegotiate their identity by fighting very hard or returning to their root where they are accepted or rejected. Otis falls into trances and it is only when he is taken to Nigeria that he becomes well again. To satisfy their nostalgic urge, individuals struggled to renegotiate their cultural identities which entail names, dress styles, accents, food, language, family and clan relationship, gender relationship, beliefs and behaviour pattern among others. All these institutions are evident in Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* and Emecheta's *Kehinde*. Most scholars have regarded Western culture which was introduced in Africa by colonialists as a destructive force, devised to eliminate traditional African values. Ngugi wa Thongs in this regard posits in *Decolonising the Mind* says that:

The effect of culture bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their language, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one Wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people's languages rather than their own. (1986, p.3)

Ngugi says, cultural bomb destroys people belief such as their names, languages and the unity among them. This make them to see their past as a wasteland where nothing good can come out of it and as such pushing them to now identity with things far away from them, like other people languages.

In Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name*, the idea of Otis search of identity starts when he possesses a numerous trances that form the sounds of African music. This started when they drive back home from his birthday party and as he switches on the radio of his car, with the drum

beats of some Africa music he is possessed as it is written: “He had heard none of those words. They had not been spoken into his ears, but implanted into his instincts from this point he was conscious only of a burden of duty he could not grasp” (2004, p.3). The strange words have never been heard before. Otis has never heard of them but these words are planted in his instincts. Immediately he hears them, he becomes aware of a burden/responsibility he has to fulfill.

Norma, Otis’ girlfriend witnessed this strange attitude again and again when they visited the Caribbean restaurant and the same drums music is played he starts speaking a strange language. Norma decides to report it to his parents. With all these strange happenings Melba and Hampton think of their past especially their roots if they can really be the cause of Otis’ spasm. As the spasm continues, Norma suggested that Otis should be taken to a psychiatrist. His parents immediately contact Dr. Fishbein who investigates and informs the parents that the solution of their son problem is in Africa. At first, Otis looks skeptical about him because he is a white and asks his father: “This Dr. Fishbein, is he...black or white?...it doesn’t? You want to send me to a white shrink? How is he going to deal with my kind of problem?”(2004, p.48)

Otis knows his problem cannot be solved by a white and this brings the idea of going back to Africa, the root of his problem. Despite all the suggestions given by African-Americans, Otis’s family needs to go to Africa in search for their past and come into terms with their people. They have to renegotiate their space in their new culture. They reconcile themselves with the reality-the need for one’s true identity. From this we come to understand how Otis’ grandfather Akimbowale was captured and taken to America. Otis’ father and Dr. Fishbein take him to Africa (Nigeria) where they trace as his roots and he learns the Yoruba language. Otis takes a new name after completing the grandfather’s praise song. Otis in this novel engages in fighting for the black liberation.

This is seen in Kehinde when Kehinde after been informed that her father is in Sokoto ,she had a dream where she sees her brother and sister and she makes an elaborate bed for her Taiwo in darkness, giving her the most comforting part of the mat. As she gets up in sensation of floating, just to discover it is daylight. She remarks:

It forms a tunnel of oranges, blues and pinks, and I float through. As I go, the voice of a solo singer drifts towards me, accompanied by the gentle twanging of a kora as I emerge, I see a group of women, wearing white shift-like garments, smiling and waving palm fronds as if in greeting. I hurry towards them, smiling and waving. Then I see my father...his arms open in welcome, urging me to come...I hear a low, piercing cry...A woman face I cannot see....(1994, pp.30-31)

Kehinde remarks from the dream she had where she sees oranges blues and pinks floating. And hears the voice of a singer coming towards her, she also sees a group of women with white garments smiling and waving palm fronds as a sign of greeting. As she moves towards them she saw her father with arms open to welcome her, then a cry from a woman she cannot recognize the voice. She is so touched with such dreams in that there is a message behind it. Africans belief much in dreams as part of their culture in that their ancestors speak to them in dream as is the case with Kehinde. Thus, she realizes she has to renegotiate space. Dreams are part of African culture as it reveals truth. Kehinde through her dreams sees her family; that is the father, brother and sisters whom she has never been informed about them and she sees a woman whose face she did not see clearly. This woman appears to be her late mother. Thus, dreams play a vital role as tradition is concerned in that people come to know their real identity through dreams.

In Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name*, another aspect of African culture is the drum beat. The drum is a symbol of joy and triumph. It is played in ceremonies, funerals and to summon people to traditional demands. The drum is also used to complete Otis' chant and makes it meaningful. When Otis hears any drum music he goes into trance and begins altering an unintelligent speech. All this is as a result of the cultural ties between the living and the death. We see Olu the drummer who takes or plays a greater part in the completion of Oriki (the praise chant) that Otis' ancestor leaves uncompleted as such renegotiating cultural identities by bring the young and the old. Also the drummer portrays some cultural aspects when he first meets the new comers. His way of greetings is done traditional as it is written:

The man greets the new arrivals with a bow, and they respond similarly. In their exchanges with the man, before Otis and the others can join them, McAdoo and his party are told the name of the nearby village: Ijoko- Odo. The man's name is Akinwunmi, and he is the chief babalawo (divination priest and healer) of the village. (2004, p.120)

The drummer greets the visitors bowing and they did the same. McAdoo tells them from their reaction the name of the nearby village and the name of the chief who is a diviner and a healer of the village. This also shows the culture of the people as they believe in diviners and healers.

In *Kehinde*, Albert's attitude towards the host country is one of disowning and rejection. In Albert's case, many of the symptoms of rejection which comes as a result of frustration, irritation and disappointment which arise with his contact with the host culture are still present. Perhaps this frustrated state of Albert is best expressed when he says that he is "nobody, just a storekeeper" (1994, p.35) in Britain and that he should return to Nigeria to become "respected as somebody" (1994, p.35). All these expressions signify that Albert does not have an identity in Britain and that he is not recognized there. The cultural differences are also disturbing for Albert and he often expresses his disturbance openly. An example of this expression can be seen when Albert voices his opinion about his relationship with the culture of Britain: "...we are in a strange land, where you do things contrary to your culture" (1994 p.15). Perhaps this statement by Albert is the first expression in the novel of the clash between cultures.

Later in the novel, Albert's discussion with his Pakistani friend Prahbu, show his cynical attitude towards women and their status in society who has a comparatively moderate approach towards the same matter as a result of his interaction with the host culture for a longer period: Prahbu, however, though well acquainted with the privileges of the traditional male, remained skeptical about their relevance to men like himself and Albert. .... (1994, p.35)

The difference between the definitions of gender roles in traditional Nigerian and modern British cultures is a source of frustration for Albert. Even though he was the initiator of the immigration of the couple, and lived for eighteen years in the socio-cultural environment of Britain, Albert still cannot come to terms with the western patterns of gender relations. Albert obsession to return to Nigeria where culture is respected became eminent as a means to renegotiate space.

Where culture is mostly observed is during the farewell party designed by Albert according to Nigerian tradition and in a quasi-ritualistic manner, occurs on the eve of his final return to Nigeria. He gives instruction to his wife as regards the party preparations, Albert asks his wife to buy presents for the guests, "just as [they] do at home" (1994, p.38). Accordingly, Kehinde does not fail to keep to the instructions and prepares a party which presents the authenticity of a traditional Nigerian gathering. With all the traditional outfits and food "the party Albert Okolo gave

when he was leaving London” (1994, p.38) is almost like a “rite of return”. It is also symbolic because this makes him to feel his culture once again although in a strange land. As it is said:

She treated her guests to the whole array of Nigerian traditional styles and fabrics, from guinea boubou to aso-oke and buba, to the Igbo lace blouse and George lappa, ending with the Igbo ceremonial costume of white out-ogwu. This consisted of a cloth wound around her body beneath the armpits, leaving her shoulders bare. Precious coral beads adorned her neck, hair and ears. The outfit was to emphasise her position as first wife of the son, and the mother of a son herself. (1994, p.38)

Kehinde treats her visitors like they were in Nigeria. She uses all the traditional styles and fabrics from home for her mark ups. All her dressings were a real outfit back at home with a cloth round her body and beneath her armpits and her shoulders open. In addition, she put on beads on her neck, hair and ears. All these dressings present her as the first wife. Thus she renegotiates space by the use of her cultural outfit.

Albert considers this party as a party for their local Igbo family. All the decoration was to prove their culture and for the other invited guest to admire. This is in a way renegotiating their cultural in heritage in that while the party was going on, Mary a university graduate finger the coral beads on Kehinde’s body and even comments “One would have thought you were just getting married” (1994, p.38). This is because of the colourful decoration/dresses she was putting on.

More to that, ritual is one of the cultural aspects presented in Okpewho’s novel. It portrays the Africa culture in a great deal. Otis has to be initiated into the cult of strong men so that he may be recognised as one of them:

There is a club in this town, he said, which young men like you must belong to. In the old days, he said, only people who had done powerful things like fighting wars or hunting wild beasts could belong to such club. If you had grown up in this town, you would have qualified automatically. Mind you, he said, it is no longer compulsory for our young men to join the club... But what you have come to do is no ordinary ritual. So I agree totally with iya wa meji. It is necessary to go through the initiation ceremony, so that you may be fully recognised as a son of the land who can participate in the serious business of the cult.” (2004, p.197)

Otis needs to be initiated in the club to be one of them. He is told that before, the club was only for men who carried out great things in the village like the killing of wild beasts. And again if he had grown up in this village he could have automatically be one of them. But since he is coming from afar, he has to go through an initiation ceremony so as to be fully recognised as son of the land.

For the initiation, they need to cut a dog's head in the cleansing spot where the ancestors performed the last dance before they were taken for slave trade, they prayed over a twin head and that of Otis. They robed their foreheads with chalk as he chants prayers to which they respond. This is for protections against all evil forces who will try to contest them during the ceremony. These enable Otis to identify himself among his people as such helping him to renegotiate his cultural identity. He compares his past life and the present one and prefers the present condition where there is no discrimination. The inhuman treatment meted on Africans and the ploy to remake their belief systems is strongly resented in Fanon's *Back Skin, White Masks*:

the doubling of identity: the difference between personal identity as an intimation of reality, or an intuition of being, and the psychoanalytic problems of identification that always begs the question of the subject: what does a man want? The emergence of the human subject as socially and psychically authenticated on the negotiation o of fulfillment. (1968, p.121)

Fanon is saying here that, the dual personalities matter a lot in every human being. And that of identification becomes a serious problem. According to him, what men need is the real renegotiation of oneself. That is joining all the beings into one.

The lives of a people in all traditional societies are shaped by the cultural and historical realities that they experience, and which give them an identity. That society is culture- which is a way of life that is transmitted from one generation to the next through socialization. Thus, culture like history, has an integration function. In that regard, W.E. Abram's believes that: "by uniting the people in common beliefs, actions and values, culture fills with order that portion of life and history which lies beyond the pale of state intervention.... It fills it in such a way as to integrate its society on the basis of common identity" (1968, p.27). Abram believes that cultural beliefs unite people and makes them feel as if they belong in all other aspects of life. Culture is the way and life of a people especially the Africans .Africans face a similar problem of cultural annihilation and the struggle for identity. Cultural and politically, Britain made a great impact on the African society.

The British influence started as early as the 16th century. British interest was on spices and textiles and their rule could be measured after the Clive of India's victory at Plessey in 1757. British rule became much effective as they learned most of the indigenous languages through local scribes, linguists and priests. The British learnt a range of art and culture, gathered and collected knowledge about indigenous customs. Colleges were established to teach English and European languages based on the British education style. This subsequently linked African writers to literary tradition of the West as well as their native culture. They controlled politicians and took major decisions. Africans were on cross-road and did not know which culture to hold tied on.

This becomes one element of traditional Nigerian culture which plays the most important role in Kehinde's comfortable adaptation by reconciling her two cultural identities is her being a twin-born. In fact, the metaphor of twin-birth that dominates the whole novel by being reflected in the title of the novel as well as in the name of the protagonist is not only an expression of the biological and psychological duality of Kehinde, but also an expression of a dual cultural identity reflected in the novel and its dual socio-cultural context. Thus, Kehinde's coming to terms with the twin-born nature of her existence and with the spirit of her dead sister, namely Taiwo, or her 'chi', runs parallel to her total adaptation into British society.

Kehinde's relationship with her twin sister Taiwo, the first-born of the twins, is rather supernatural in that her twin sister is dead. Kehinde is able to murmur to Taiwo, her long-deceased twin sister, in the closing paragraph of the novel: "Claiming my right does not make me less of a mother, not less of a woman. If anything it makes me more human." (1994, p.141). It is explained in the novel that after giving birth first to Kehinde's still-born sister and later to Kehinde their mother died. After the incident Kehinde is accused by the superstitious members of her family of killing her mother and sister and she is treated as if she were a cursed creature. However, Kehinde's confrontation with this harsh reality is rather positive, in that when she learns about the incident she begins to carry a carved wooden image of her dead sister, her Taiwo or her "shadow." It follows that Kehinde's positive attitude toward her "shadow" may be considered as the reason for her seeking for and achieving an eventual compromise with the "other" within herself at the end of the novel.

Taiwo's role as the initiator of action on behalf of Kehinde so that she can begin to question the realities of her life has utmost significance in itself. However, it functioning as the resolution factor in Kehinde's travel back to Nigeria and her return travel to Britain can be considered as



having the most significant influence on her culture. When Kehinde goes to Nigeria to join her family she realizes that it is not “her” family any more. Albert has taken another wife, Rike, a young university lecturer. Kehinde has to accept her new status of calling her husband ‘our husband’ (1994, p.71) and her children ‘our children’ (1994, p.87). Kehinde’s image of Nigeria as home is shattered as she finds out that her way of perception of cultural values, which has been shaped during her acculturation in Britain, is at clash with the Nigerian society. She is so much disappointed and disturbed by the turn things have taken that even the furniture in the house, which has been transported from their house in London with Kehinde’s hopes of living quite the same happy life in another country, is not enough to make her feel at “home.” Thus, after a while she begins to long for and romanticize about Britain, remembering that:

...this was October, autumn in England. The wind would be blowing, leaves browning and falling. In a few weeks, the cherry tree in her back garden would be naked of leaves, its dark branches twisted like old bones. On a day like this, after the Friday shopping, her feet would be stretched in front of her gas fire, while she watched her favourite serials on television until she was tired and until her eyes ached. Autumn in England. (1994, p.96)

Kehinde remembers in a flashback October, autumn in England where the wind blows, leaves fall. And in a few weeks the trees are all emptied. During day like this, after her shopping, she will stretch her feet in front of her gas kitchen and watched her favourite series on the television. This is not the same back in Nigeria. She finds herself renegotiating a new space.

Consequently, Kehinde finds a means of contact with her life in Britain through a letter which she writes to her best friend Moriammo and tells about her disappointments in Nigeria. Luckily, the outcome of the correspondence is that Moriammo sends Kehinde enough money to buy a plane ticket back to Britain. Hence, without making her return travel known to Albert and his sisters, Kehinde literally escapes from Nigeria, which is perhaps an inevitable decision to be made by an immigrant who has gone through the most difficult and critical phases of adaptation to another country and thus feels alienated in her own.

Kehinde’s decision to return to Britain after her disappointment in Nigeria is also evaluated by Hawley, who states that Kehinde’s case is an example of “progressive” mode of orientation in immigrant literature, “in which the individual critically assesses his past and present situation and acts according to the conclusions he draws in order to improve his situation” (1996, p.339). Hence,

Kehinde's move from one geographical space to another, that is from Nigeria to Britain, can surely be considered as a decisive and progressive step in her cross-cultural adaptation, which also expresses that she is "doubly rooted" and that she "do [es] not live between countries, but instead attempts to form a psychic bridge across the metaphysical space separating them" (1996, p.339). Therefore, Kehinde's return is what Homi K. Bhabha calls "the return of the diasporic, the postcolonial [hybrid]" (1994, p.319).

When Kehinde arrives in Britain she feels herself liberated and comfortably "at home" after the depressing atmosphere of Nigerian life. She sees the two cultures as different. One which does not segregates and one that segregates as she said:

...though it was cold, the sun was shining, and she felt a surge of elation. Only a few hours before, still in Nigeria, she had thought the whole world was collapsing. Now she noticed that the trees the council had planted along the street were just beginning to bud. In a few days, they would burst into bloom, and it would be spring. (1994, p.107)

Kehinde while in Nigeria some few hours ago though the world was coming to an end. While in the west, she discovers the trees the council just planted is beginning to bud. And in a few days they would burst into bloom and it will be a spring again. She is in a way creating a new space for herself with the use of these images.

This positive tone that is created by the spring image can also be read as an indication of the last step of the successful transplantation of Kehinde into English soil where she will flourish and "burst into bloom" in fine weather, as an integrated member of British society. The implications of such nature imagery in terms of the expression of a certain cultural stance is also discussed by Homi K. Bhabha who points out that "the English weather also revives memories of its daemonic double: the heat and dust of India; the dark emptiness of Africa" (1990, p.319). Then, it may be argued that the moment Kehinde returns to Britain is also a moment in which two cultures, and the two concepts of the home and exile, are juxtaposed in Kehinde's mind. However, the aim of this juxtaposition at the moment of return is neither a complete rejection of the culture of origin, the "residual," nor a total assimilation into the culture of the host society, the "dominant", but an appropriation of the two, in other words an arrival at the "emergent."

The new hybrid and bicultural identity to be achieved by Kehinde is also implied in the novel through the emergence of Taiwo's voice, 'Kehinde rebuked the voice: "This is not my home. Nigeria is my home.' As she said it, she knew she was deceiving herself, and Taiwo would not let her get away with it. 'We make our own choices as we go along,' came the voice. 'This is yours. There's nothing to be ashamed of in that'" (1990, p.108).

This voice tells Kehinde that home is home. Taiwo keeps ringing this in her mind. Taiwo tells her they make different choices as they move in life and we should never be ashamed for our choices. In order word we should never be ashamed with our decisions. No matter where Kehinde chooses to renegotiate space becomes her home, thus, her decision should make her happy.

The next thing Kehinde does after this self-encouragement is to take off the "For Sale" sign which is posted on a window of her house and to say "This house is not for sale. This house is mine" (1994, p.108). Eventually and through the guidance of her Taiwo, Kehinde makes the decision about where "home" is. This final settlement is also accompanied by a simultaneous reconciliation, symbolically speaking, of Kehinde's "multiple voices" (Hawley, 1996, p. 339), her double cultural identities. This is best expressed in the last line of the novel: "'Now we are one,' the living Kehinde said to the spirit of her long dead Taiwo" (1994, p.141). This is to show that the Africans believe in the spirits which is part of their culture. That is the belief of the supernatural.

Such an outcome is also in line with the thematic structure of the work. The emancipation and resettlement of African women is a recurrent theme in Emecheta's works and in Kehinde it is presented in the context of the lives of Nigerian immigrants in Britain in the 1970s. In other words, cultural adaptation into a modern western culture is fore grounded, emphasised and referred to in the novel as a means of emancipation for Nigerian women, while the cultural values of Nigerian society that are enslaving for women are associated with and represented by deceitful and oppressive male figures. Consequently, with respect to the characters that are analysed here and to other characters which cannot be included now, female Nigerian immigrants appear to be more successful in creating bicultural and hybrid identities for themselves in an alternative "emergent" culture, thereby achieving the final passage towards a new "home," whereas male Nigerian immigrants opt to return, both physically and psychologically, to their traditional origins and to the territory.

For a relatively long time now, there have existed three schools of thought as to what the language of African literature should be. The first school, with Bernard Fonlon and Wole Soyinka as its major exponent, argues that foreign languages should be used at their best in the production of art. To them, English, French and any other colonial language could be used well if the speakers understand them. The second school, championed by Achebe argues that the effort to decolonize black literature is important. They reject the idea of respecting the rules of the colonial language which the first school has proposed, and emphasized the Africanisation of colonial language to suit the writer's context. This to Achebe is because the White man's language cannot carry the weight of his African experience.

The third and most radical school is that which proposes a complete abandonment of European languages and the use of African national languages. This group is championed by Ngugi who argues that writing in foreign languages perpetuates neo-colonialism and that all African literature in English is Euro-African and not African Literature. To him, English becomes a colonial language thus:

African writers of the 80s have no choice but to join in the people struggle for survival. In that situation, he will have to confront the languages spoken by the people in whose service he has put his pen. Such a writer will have to rediscover the real language of struggle in the actions and speeches of his people, learn from their great optimism and faith in the capacity of human beings to remark their world and renew themselves. He must be part of the song of the people. (2002, p.65) Ngugi has for a long time made it his duty to resist that English. Ngugi believes that the colonial language still holds embedded colonial values, thereby acting to constrain expression and perpetuate cultural inferiority complexes. He highlights the displacement suffered where literature fails to reflect local reality and where a foreign language defines local reality. Thus, in Africa as in the Caribbean, suppression of native languages in favour of English was used as an instrument of imperial rule. To fight imperialism, Ngugi thus abandons the English language and publishes his first modern novel in Gikuyu entitled *Caitano Muthera*, later translated as *Devil on the Cross*. He also wrote *Matigari* and *Njiruugi* and *Ngaayika Ndenka* which were all only later translated into English as *Matigari* and *I Will Marry When I Want*.

Emecheta in *Kehinde* makes excessive use of Pidgin English. The following conversation between Kehinde and Mariammo is a case in point: "What is the matter? Abi, you done quarrel with Alby? Oh! I no know, Mariammo. I don tell am say, I pregnant Hh, him no happy? These our men

just wan make we get belle every time. I beg stop-o, Mariammo your voice dey give me headache” (date, pp.8-9).

The above lines display Emecheta’s use of pidgin and though living in London, Mariammo and Kehinde in their use of language still identify themselves with Africa, thus, renegotiating space in the west.

Emecheta in her novels draw a lot of inspiration from traditional beliefs and myths. In *The Bride Price* for example, is rooted in the Igbo traditional myth on the formalities of marriage. This myth is used to show the effects of revolt on the rest of the people. When Aku-nna violates tradition and gets marry to a slave boy, she dies at child birth. Aku-nna is also believed to be an ‘Ogbanji’, a child who behaves unusual and has links with the spirit and the human world. Emecheta draws from the Ogbanji myth whenever Aku-nna does something unusual. We first learn of her abnormal behaviour is when the author says she is so pale and probable an Ogbanji who will have all the diseases people in the compound complaint of, such as chicken pox and malaria. “For her, it was forever a story of today foot, tomorrow head, the next day after neck, so much so that her mother many at times begged her to decide once and for all whether she was going to live or die” (1976, p.3) Nna-nndo repeats this to Ako-nna when she empties all the water in the pot following the appearance of her first menses. Emecheta also tells the story through the use of folktales. She uses characters like aunty Uzo who tell stories to Aku-nna and her friends. The stories are full of philosophical lessons about one thing or another that give them the opportunity to learn. For example, Aku-nna learns from the stories that her ancestors where real forest people, “whose birth, marriages, maidens wearing shorts, performing the aja or oduko bells on their thin ankles” (1976, p.20)

Thus, traditional beliefs and myths are very important to the Africans in that all what befall them is something already planned and nothing happens by chance. They beliefs their ancestors protect and direct their actions.

There is also, an excellent use of folklore technique is seen in *Kehinde* especially Kehinde’s relationship with her Taiwo. It was believed that when a twin is born and one dies, the one who is alive is accused of being the cause of the death of the other. Throughout the novel, Kehinde is in an intimate relationship with her Taiwo. The relationship between the death and the living is a common cultural practice in the Ibuza community and one which Emecheta draws a lot of inspiration from.

Emecheta makes use of symbols. There is an excessive use of local symbols in Kehinde at the level of incident, places and names. In terms of names, Aku-n na means father's wealth as we learn, "he had named her Aku-nna, meaning literary father's wealth" (1994, p.4). This shows the extent to which parents look at their female children only in terms of wealth or money in the Nigerian society. Albert in Kehinde symbolizes hatred, greed, selfishness and traditional patriarchal laws. Symbols are very much used by the Africans in their daily lives.

In Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name*, Otis while in Africa is forced to learn the Yoruba language, without which he would not complete the grandfather's praise song and consequently would not be completely healed. Otis is a hybrid in that he does not negate either his Yoruba culture or his American culture. With the African and the American cultures, this idea of cultural mix is glaring in the novel. This idea of cultural mix is seen in the different letters Otis writes to his parents. This is a blend of English and the Yoruba language. He writes: Until the, my friend Emi ni yen Otis Akimbowale Hampton omo Jagunjagun alaya inaki (2004, p.257).

Otis Hampton blends the two cultures in his writings. Even his name is a blend that is "Otis Akimbowale Hampton". That is bring together the "self" and the "other or the "centre" and the "margin". As such, he renegotiates the two cultures and creates a new space for himself. In Okpewho's novel, he presents the resistance the Africans put up in America when they are force to accept the position of an inferior race. We even come across a discussion between Norma and Mr. Barrett where he explains to her how Africans are forcefully taken from Africa to work as labourers in the whites plantations in the West Indies as he says:

Good. An' we people dem come from Africa. Is a pity dem white man bring us heah in slave ship. Dat be trick dem white man make fe ketch we fe come from Africa and work in dem plantation. But dat no mean say we forget we culture. If we people so primitive and savage, like dem white man say, why you tink the maroon war laas so lang? Tell me dat. (2004, p.36)

Mr. Barrett makes Norma to know that the Africans were not backward as the white man used to put it when they came to work in their plantation. The Africans would hardly forget their tradition/culture. If they are savage as such, then why did the war between the Maroon and the whites last for long?

He presents facts to Norma to show her how his ancestors live and how those in Africa are living so as to help her carry out her research probably on the maroon culture. He struggles to locate her mind in relocating their real identities as such renegotiating their cultural identity. He tells her that their real identities are not known. Mr. Berrett renegotiates his cultural identity by refusing the stereotype ideas propagated by the whites. He tells Norma that the Whiteman education is opium to poison the mind of the Blacks by making them believe that their culture is inferior. With this he says, But book is them white man tool fe take poison we people mind, make dem forget say we have own culture. Seen Lang Lang time we people a-know 'bout culture and civilization .... (2004, p.3)

As a result of continued rejection the blacks in the Diaspora are preoccupied with identity, integration and acceptance. This is seen with the Hampton's family as they accept someone else's society and neglect their own roots. Hampton seeks to participate in the cultural and national discourse of that society in which he is not really part of it because of his black race. The Hampton's family is a God-fearing Baptist Christians family and they have done a lot of contribution in their locality through music but they still face the rod of the Whiteman's discrimination. As a result of all these, the Africans in the Diaspora must rise up, assert their culture, retrace their roots and be proud of their identity which for decades has been suppressed by the Whiteman. Although we blacks claim to be white no white from the beginning of time has ever claimed to be black. In Okpewho's novel he is telling the blacks that they should not be ashamed of their roots because denying your root is equally denying your own self.

Miz Odetta, Hampton's mother reacts violently against Mr. Nuffield's insult by making it clear to him that she does not regret being black. Thus in one's life there comes a time when confronted with otherness one begins to reconstruct or renegotiate her own identity. She says "Oh I don't know, mas Nuffield, sir, "she said ever so cheerfully, "if yo' color is what lie 'nea the that dark skin o'his, he might regret using that ol'soap till the day he die" (2004, p.180). She makes him understand that the life of a black man is the same as that of a white. In addition to this Mr. Hampton will never forget his encounter with Mr. Nuffield which inspires in him a sense not only of being proud of his black skin but that subsequently in his dealings with the Whiteman he must cultivate a style that strikes a balance between firmness and discretion.

Furthermore, Mr. Hampton's father grows up at the time of slavery and cultivates silence as a strategy for self-preservation. This is the reason why he does not get into quarrels. Meanwhile Mr.

Hampton's grandfather is said to be a "Goodman, stubborn African. Didn't let no man give him no horse shit" (2004, p.18). Hampton's grandfather has a sense of respect, esteem and dignity for himself. Okpewho is thus advocating for the fact that Blacks should engage in various struggles towards emancipation which provide a means to re-examine the problem of nationality, location, identity and historical memory. It is in accordance with this that Otis informs us as Okpewho writes ; "...if I've learnt my lesson well, I must remember to see this as an opportunity to join my people in search for truths that have been hidden from us too long" (2004, p. 250). Otis sees himself as an African that is why he calls them his people and wish to go back and meets them one day.

Also Okpewho insists that the Blacks to renegotiate their cultural identity because it is a mean of achieving wholeness for the African-American. The black must appreciate his history. There is the urgency for the Africans in the Diaspora to stop negating their African past and forge ahead. Thus, Ella Pearl in *Call Me By My Rightful Name* demonstrates this positive tendency. As it is said:

...she was quite active in community affairs and was for long time president of the local chapter of a group called the daughters of Africa. The organization set itself the task of redeeming the "true" facts of Africa's history and culture from the "tarnishment" of white prejudice, giving firm support to the call by Marcus Garvey and the UNIA for a return of Negroes to Africa. (2004, p.19)

Ella thinks it is good to be active in your community as she has been the president of the local chapter group called the daughters of Africa for long. This organisation presents the true face of Africa and its history/culture from all the prejudices the white man had been saying. This is in a way renegotiating space. This come to crown it all that culture and identity are vital for the African-American to be whole again and constitutes a strategy for survival. The quotation gives a physical reconstruction leading to the renegotiation of cultural identity.

As such, Ella Pearl goes further in the renegotiation of her cultural identity by maintaining spiritual links with her ancestors. She is the only person, who identifies the voices that are speaking through Otis as she says: "This is our people talking. Don't tell me you don't hear it, Otis Jay. That is our ancestors talking through your boy... Your son is not sick, Otis Jay, our ancestors are talking God's time comes never too soon nor too late" (2004, p.90).



She is one of those who encourage Otis to take the trip to Africa. All alone she prefers to be the one to be chosen by the ancestors to renegotiate their cultural roots. She wishes to go to Africa but the mother discouraged her by saying “Aint no sense in goin’ less’n you know yo’kinfolk over there we done left; Af; ca too long to know the way back ‘you bes’ leave Af’ca be.”(2004, p.19) But this is not true because they are still ostracized. Okpewho is here telling the Africans in the Diaspora that they need to envisage themselves by retracing his roots rather remain where he is forever.

In Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, he deconstructs the Eurocentric misrepresentation as he presents a post-colonial society with African values. The novel also portrays rich aspects of the Ibo culture. Thus this entirely sum up to the fact that what the Whiteman calls truth about Africa is not an atom of reality as they claim, rather they are mere propositions that have been constructed on the basis of western conventional expectations. As Achebe is engaged in helping his society in Africa to maintain its beliefs and values, Okpewho is busy helping the Africans Americans in the Diaspora to regain them by renegotiating their cultural identity.

Again, in Okpewho’s novel, characters like Norma and Mr. Barrett (the Guinea man) also stand for these African cultural values as they both represent African migrants working in the West India plantations. They call themselves the Maroon people from Jamaica. Mr. Barrett tells Norma that their real African name is the ‘Kramanti people’ not savages or primitive race as they were generally called by white men. This brings in this idea of representation or identity and renegotiation”. Norma searches for the truth as Mr. Barrett regards books as “white man’s weapon” to poison the minds of blacks and make them forget their own past. Norma and Mr. Barrett are embodiments of the migrants who have a nostalgia for an ‘irrevocable original history and tradition, and also uphold the need to mediate this within more dominant culture (Ashcroft, Bill et al, 2004, p.70). Mr Barrett plays a Caribbean musical tune for Norma and speaks so reverently of their past in Ghana with a feeling of nostalgia. Even as they have learnt and assimilated much of the white man’s culture, they still struggle to uphold their original culture.

Another aspect in this novel is the puberty rites of passage through Sumba’s initiation. It is a ritual from childhood to womanhood as such:

A couple of weeks ago, Mrs. Fagbenero came to my place to say the family had made plans to circumcise Sumbo. The poor girl let them know she would submit to be cut only if I was there to hold her. Though I know the custom still happened here, I never wanted to have anything to do with it. (2004, p.238)

Sumbo is circumcised as Otis chronicles the experience in one of his letters to Norma. This ritual is performed by the elders such as Mrs. Adeloye the female herbalist as the leader. To the Yoruba this is part of the child's upbringing. Otis is invited to witness this ritual by Sumbo as a sign of support and courage. During the ritual proper, all the doors are locked. Mrs. Adeloye heats the blade to be used on the fire as a means of disinfection. After this she closes her eyes, mumbles some words to herself and then uses the blade on Sumbo. When she is finished, she rubs some herbal cream between Sumbo's legs to help reduce the pains. This is practiced in most of the African countries. As such they are renegotiating their cultural identities since this has to be done so that one should belong.

When reading Richard Wright's *Black Boy*, the treatment the blacks receive are the same. They are even referred to as the "nigger". A black is a lesser being to a white; the blacks have separate schools, markets and roads from the white. They are even treated with disgust. They often serve as servants. Wright brings out a situation where black boy is always beaten by the white children whenever his mother sends him. He becomes a focal point of humiliation to the white children. They always wait for him on the way with sticks which symbolizes superiority as the white did during slavery and slave trade where they tortured the blacks with robes and any other thing that could serve as a whip, this scared Wright to join or play with them. When they see him, they called him 'nigger' and laugh and beat him. They look at him as a dog. To fight for his right and identity, the mother tells him each time he comes crying that he should be strong and fight back. This he did in one of his attacks as Wright says: "The boy picks up a tiny rock and put it on his shoulder and walked close again. "Knock it off"...I brushed the rock from his shoulder and ducked and grabbed him about the legs and dumped him to the ground" (1945, p.107). This stick is a symbol. Richard's mother is in a way telling him that, he is to be a man; he should stand up and fight for his right as such renegotiating his cultural identity. The mother is telling him to fight against the oppression and suppression of the white. Blacks are subjected to all form of odd jobs. Richard is taught how to milk by white women when he goes out for job. Richard Wright writes, 'One woman had assumed that I would tell her if I stole, and this woman was amazed that I could not milk a cow, I, a nigger who dared live in Jackson...' (1945, p.129)

To the whites anything black has a negative thought. Richard is considered a thief because he is a black and a white woman asks him if he can milk because all the odd jobs are reserved for the blacks. Richard turns all these down as a sign of renegotiating his identity as a black.

Characters like Otis Akimbowale Hampton, Ella Pearl and Mr. Barret are hybrids that are able to fight cultural suppression by inculcating both the African and the American cultures. As such, hybridity becomes a means through which Africans in the Diaspora can fight to renegotiate their cultural identity.

Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* also depicts a situation where cultural identity is renegotiated because of this feeling of nostalgia. The plot is intricate and extraordinary, bridging the gap between the U.S.A and Africa as very few novelists are prepared to do, and very few get to understand. At the heart of the book is the simple cry of a man who is lost here and finds himself there, only to find his way once again as benighted, as the Middle Ages. In East Africa the novelists and poets are hearkening to Okot P'Bitek's poem, "Song of Lawino" as in Ngugi's *Homecoming*: "Listen O'col, my old friend the ways of your ancestors are good, their customs are solid and not hallow they are not thin, not easily breakable, they cannot be blown by the winds, because their roots reach deep into the soil" (2012, p.44).

O'col in the poem is telling the old friend the way their ancestors were good and how their customs were solid and unshakable. These could not be blown or destroyed by anybody because of their fameness.

This is to show the strong link between the ancestors and those living. We see this link in Okpewho novel where Otis sleeps, a voice came one night and spoke in a strange tongue that he (Otis) should visit his ancestral shrine and pay respect so that things should be good for him again. Otis forgot the message in the morning as usual; he had the thought deep in him that, there is something he has to do. He always reminds himself as a duty. We see here that, no matter what one the idea of the past still comes to the present. Otis cannot live without the past. We must always renegotiate our cultural identity. Otis' duty which he finally accomplished also identifies him as an Africa. If not of this feeling of nostalgia, Otis will not have come to complete the praise song which also brings him to self-realization.

Culture in *Call Me By My Rightful Name* is also highlighted through Diaspora paradigm. We see this when the protagonist Otis comes in contact with the twin sisters Taiwo and Kehinde (his late grandfather's sisters). They share a piece of kola nut which portrays that aspect of Africa solidarity which Otis has missed for all this while. To the Africa, kolanut is a symbol of life. This Achebe says "He who brings kola brings life". Kolanut to an African is more important especially sharing it with guests. It is a sign of trust, love and togetherness. It is after sharing the kolanut that the twin informed Otis that he must learn the Oriki Yoruba language which is a praise song used for saluting and the same time describing the main attributes of a person and his family. We come to know that Otis is very happy learning the language of his fore-father when he writes informing his parents that he is putting in much effort in learning that language. Otis is in a way renegotiating his cultural beliefs which he abandoned for years unknowingly. He becomes so involved with his Africa brothers that he even introduces a basketball in his school and forms a team. We see the transnational aspect of culture, that is to say, since he loves basketball in America he believes to that his African brothers in Nigeria will equally enjoy playing it and they do.

In addition to this, gender stereotyping is also transnational. In America, Norma sees herself as equal to Otis meanwhile in Nigeria, the twin-Kehinde and Taiwo are not given the position of chief because they are women. This brings in the aspect of male domination in the Africa society which needs to be renegotiated. We see this culture renegotiated when Otis mother thinks she needs to be given full development of how her child is going while in Africa and the husband did just that. She is not neglected at the corner as it used to be.

Also when Kehinde in Emecheta's *Kehinde* gets in the front seat of the car beside Albert to go visit her children at school, she is reprimanded by Albert's older sister as a way of uplifting the Nigeria culture as they said:

I say, I am coming with you. What is wrong with you?... Who do you think you are? Don't you see your mate, Rike? Don't you see her sitting at the back with her maid and Baby? When we, the relatives of the head of the family are here, we take the place of honour by our Albert... Kehinde almost died of shame... only young brides with her poor training made such mistake. (1994, p.88)

Thus, a woman is not given the same respect as the man even in her home when her in-laws are round. She has to give her position to them as Albert's sisters put it in the above quotation. Also

as a result of the polygamous nature of the society makes everyone to be surprised in Kehinde when she asked her husband why he had to get another wife. This is because; everybody expects that as a Nigerian woman she should understand that polygamy is part of the culture to her people. Polygamy thus becomes a typical aspect in Africa.

Like the true traditional woman mama Kadunais, she wants Kehinde not to accept Albert's second wife Rike but equally to honour and respect Albert and his close relatives. Kehinde sitting on the front seat in a car, which Mama Kaduna was also supposed, to enter was seen as an act of disrespect and thus had to be scorned and abused.

The conflict between Mama Kaduna and Kehinde is precipitated by culture differences. Kehinde has lived in a culture where there is nothing wrong in her sitting in front of the car but in Nigeria, she has to learn to give respect.

However, in the text, the back to Africa movement championed by Marcus Garvey with its president Ella Pearl has as its main task to redeem the "true" facts of Africa's history and culture from the "tarnishment" of white prejudice, giving firm support to the call by Marcus Garvey and the UNIA for a return of Negroes to Africa. Such organizations have as objective to collect Africa cultural artefacts in which a museum is later formed from it. According to him, the only place where Blacks in the Diaspora can prosper is in Africa and nowhere else.

Otis renegotiates his cultural identity as he becomes so interested in the riddles and songs parents tell the young ones in the evening. Otis finds this boring at first since he did not understand the language but he learns the language these riddles become as interesting as it also have an educational value. This is done in the Yoruba language which gives credit to this novel as one where blacks struggle to renegotiate their cultural identity.

Cultural identity is also seen in Okpewho's *Call Me By My Rightful Name* where Otis Tiger Hampton is carried away by the drums beats of Jamaican music as he drives home from his birthday party. He loses control of both himself and the car, and strangely begins to speak a strange language. This situation makes his girlfriend confused. She decides to intervene and pull the car to a halt. This reveals the fact that, although Otis is born and bred in Europe, he still retains that instinct of his native culture: folk music. Thus, Otis embodies two cultures, though it comes to reality that he needs to renegotiate his cultural identity. Similarly, Kehinde in Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde*, refuses

to live in the rooms reserved for her when she returns to Nigeria because her husband had taken another wife. Having resolved to resettle in native Nigeria, Kehinde's family, that is, her husband and children moved to Nigeria while Kehinde stayed behind in England to mortgage their house. When she finally joined her family in Nigeria, she not only found out that her husband has not only married Rike, but that they have had a son, and are awaiting a second child. This shows how the African society is patriarchy; it also highlights a patriarchal society treats a woman poorly. Kehinde is segregated to the background as far as decision making is concerned and this is very common in the African society, a woman is looked upon as the 'other' while the man is the 'center'. Kehinde faces the same humiliation in England when the Arab (white) asks her to undress for him to see how a naked black looks. She refuses to pose nude and quits her job. With her husband, she refuses to stay in Nigeria since her husband looks at her as a woman and has no right in taking decision. That is why he never informs her of the co-wife until she returns to Nigeria to discover it herself and had affection on her and this made her angry and she travels back to England to renegotiate a space there as a free woman. Kehinde is renegotiating that cultural identity of the black which for centuries have been destroyed by whites and she becomes a hybrid and fights the woman's position back in Africa.

On the other hand, the main Nigerian female immigrant character, Kehinde, seems to be doing much better than her male counterpart in reconciling her two cultural identities and adapting to the cultural environment of the host country by creating an alternative self. She achieves this neither through a total rejection of her original cultural identity, nor by accepting the culture of the host society, altogether without questioning it. Rather, she shapes for herself a bicultural and hybrid identity through a reconciliation of the two different cultures, thereby completing the process of cultural transplantation quite successfully. In other words, at the end of the novel, Kehinde is able to form a unified identity out of her dual identities.

Post-colonial theorists are also against the fact that they should completely abandon disorder that has to do with emotional blunting, intellectual deterioration, social isolation, disorganized speech and behaviour. It can be described as mental disorder which deals with the lack of connection between thought, feeling and action. This idea of split personality comes in place where people behave with a double identity. Modupe O. Olaogun's article titled 'Irony and Schizophrenia' in Bessie Head's *Maru* states: Schizophrenia evokes an image of a cleavage of mental functions. In its strictly medical sense, Schizophrenia...refers to a mental illness manifested by a splitting of the capacity for thought' (date, p.70). In *Call Me By My Rightful Name*, Otis behaviour is very unusual

as he goes into trance whenever he listens to music from the African drum. In such occasions he dances uncontrollably and issues forth sounds of an unintelligible language, "...his dishes collapse on the floor. Norma is beside herself as she runs towards Otis and tries to steady him." (2004, p.38) Cultural identity is depicted through the ancestral worship, language, communal life, proverbs and riddles, praise poetry, and ritual. Using a theoretical frame work like the Post- Colonialism, Okpewho's novel and Emecheta's novel become texts "referentiality" particularly referring to the Yoruba culture, revealing the socio-cultural realities of the African culture. Cultural identities emphasis and reveal the truth contrarily to Eurocentric standpoint. Africans have a culture if culture is a way of life.

To sum up, this chapter examined the various cultural aspects that obstruct the path towards the renegotiation of space. These aspects revive the African's consciousness and self-determinations to enable them renegotiate space in the society in which they find themselves. The writers are true novelists and the different devices found in the novels are not merely for pleasure. They used different themes to expose the ill melted against the Africans in America and in Africa by those in position of power. The goal is to make the masses (blacks) to understand their plight and fight hard to renegotiate and uphold their identity which the Whiteman has distorted for centuries.

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